



Efficient
Missionary Organization
in the
Sunday School

The Board of Sunday Schools
of the
Methodist Episcopal Church

58 East Washington Street, Chicago, Ill.

Efficient Missionary Organization in the Sunday School

The Law of the Church

"It shall be the duty of the Pastor to see that each Sunday School on his Pastoral Charge is organized into a Missionary Society." (Discipline, Paragraph 428, § 5).

Thus saith the law of the Church. Laws are not made simply for the sake of having laws: they are enacted to promote the welfare of persons and institutions. Therefore, we should expect to find good reasons back of this law of our Church.

Back of the Law

Missionary education has come to be recognized as an essential part of all religious education. It has not had an adequate place in our Sunday School curriculum; in all too many schools it has had no place whatever.

Missionary education, moreover, demands special training and qualifications on the part of those who direct it. The regular officers of the Sunday School are too busy to give the time required either for the preparation or the actual instruction of the school. It is imperative, therefore, to develop missionary specialists in every school, who shall be specially responsible for a well-rounded program of missionary education in all its phases.

The Sunday School has been entrusted with the training of those who will make up the Church of tomorrow. If tomorrow's Church is to have a dominantly missionary temper, it must receive that temper in the Sunday School. As an integral part of its training, the Sunday School must stress the development of such a world outlook and sympathy that each "efficient Christian" in the course of training will see the greatness and urgency of the world's needs, and be eagerly ready to meet them with whole-hearted offerings of prayer, service, and money.

Such good reasons as these were back of the law of our Church requiring a missionary organization in each Sunday School. For nothing but efficient organization will insure effective missionary education.

The Present Crisis

The Sunday School faces the biggest task of its history. It is called upon to train a generation that shall go forth into a war-wrecked world to live the Christian spirit of brotherhood. The world looks to Youth for its salvation. Now as never before, the Sunday School must bend every energy to the task of creating world-Christians. It is at once a staggering responsibility and a glorious opportunity.

We have often been chided for having too many *organizations* in the Church; no one has accused us, however, of having too much *organization*. And organization is exactly what we must have, if we face up to the challenge of the hour. "Everybody's business is nobody's business."

The Red Cross and Liberty Loan "drives" could never have been so successful without the most painstaking organization down to and in the last hamlet. And this much is certain: No Sunday School can hope to do its Centenary task without the most efficient, closely knit organization possible. The Centenary financial goal for the Sunday School—\$10,000,000 in five years, or \$2,000,000 each year—will never be reached unless there is someone in each school who will stand responsible for directing every phase of the project. Each school must have a missionary superintendent. And each missionary superintendent must be backed up by a wide-awake, enthusiastic committee.

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How to Organize a Sunday School Missionary Society

The following is the constitution for the Sunday School Missionary Society suggested by the Discipline:

CONSTITUTION

For Methodist Sunday School Missionary Societies

Article I

This Society shall be called the Missionary Society of the _____ Methodist Episcopal Sunday School, and shall be auxiliary to the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, and the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Article II

The object of this Society shall be to promote in all practical ways the interests of the Missionary Cause within the bounds of this School.

Article III

All the members of this School shall be members of the Society.

Article IV

The Officers of the Society shall be a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary, and Treasurer who shall together constitute a Board of Managers.

to be elected annually by the Sunday School Board on the ————— of ———

Article V

A part of the session of the School on the first Sunday of every month shall be set apart for Missionary exercises and the reception of gifts for the cause of Missions; and it shall be the duty of the Board of Managers to provide for such exercises, varying the program from month to month in such a way as to engage actively as many of the School as possible in acquiring and supplying information and inspiration on Missionary topics. The Managers shall also devise and set in vigorous operation whatever schemes they can, such as mite boxes, collection cards, occasional Missionary concerts, or sales, etc., for increasing the Missionary contributions of the School.

Article VI

The Superintendent shall have charge of that part of the School time which is devoted to Missions; the Secretary shall read at each monthly meeting a report of the previous meeting. The Treasurer shall receive the funds raised by the Society and pay them as follows: Forty-five per cent to the Board of Foreign Missions, forty-five per cent to the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, and ten per cent to the Board of Sunday Schools. The Superintendent, Secretary, and Treasurer shall make a

semi-annual report to the Society on the first Sundays of April and October.

Article VII

Vacancies in the offices may be filled at any regular or special meeting of the Sunday School Board.

Article VIII

This Constitution shall not be altered except by vote of two-thirds of all the members of the local Sunday School Board, at a meeting called for that purpose.

Date of Organization

Pastor

Sunday School Superintendent

Missionary Superintendent

How to Make the Sunday School Missionary Society Efficient

At every quarterly conference the District Superintendent asks the question: "Is the Sunday School organized into a Missionary Society?" An organization on paper sufficiently definite to make possible an affirmative answer to this question may not be an "effective" organization. An effective society must have a plan of

missionary education and giving, and must work the plan.

Selection of Officers

It may be trite to say that great care should be exercised at this point, but it is a fact which needs emphasizing. Personnel will count for everything. A nominating committee should be appointed in due time, which should search for a superintendent with the following characteristics: interest in missions, willingness to give time (every efficient person will be busy), versatility in plans and methods, sanity in his devotion to missions, a knowledge of children with an ability to adapt a message to them, and devotion to the extension of the Kingdom. Other officers should be selected with care, but the superintendent holds the key to the situation.

In large schools attention should be given to the distribution of officers among the various departments, if that can be done without sacrificing efficiency. Senior pupils should have a place on the Board. Let the Sunday School,

especially the seniors, come to think of the missionary activity as theirs. In schools which have an organized senior department, it might be wise to ask the seniors to nominate from their number a secretary or a treasurer, or possibly both.

Election of Officers

Each Sunday School Board determines its own time for the election of officers of the Sunday School Missionary Society. The election may be held at the same time as the election of other officers, but this should not be done if it results in a tendency to minimize the importance of this election. In schools where the chief educational work is carried on from September to June, it may be wise to elect officers in the spring in order that they may have time to plan adequately for the fall and winter work. In a majority of Sunday Schools, the officers begin their work with the new Conference year, as this is the fiscal year for all missionary contributions.

Duties of Officers

The duties of the officers of the Sunday School Missionary Society are such as usually pertain to the respective positions, with such additions as are mentioned in the constitution printed above and those that naturally grow out of the plans and policies adopted.

*Appointment of Committees**

Every member of the Sunday School is a member of the Missionary Society. It is, therefore, possible to appoint such committees as may be desired, although there be no provision for committees in the constitution. The number and character of these committees will be determined by the policy that is adopted for the year. Each definite point in the policy may be assigned to a different committee. The Centenary programs would be given to one group, and of this committee the superintendent would doubtless be chairman; the Centenary offering

* For a fuller discussion of this point, see Chapter IV of *Missionary Methods for Sunday School Workers*, by Geo. H. Trull.

to another, of which the treasurer would be a member, possibly the chairman; a library committee, a committee on community or social service endeavor are other possibilities. The senior department should have a representative on each of these committees, the members being nominated by the department organization. In large Sunday Schools where each department has separate devotional exercises, it may be desirable to appoint a committee for each department. If this is done the chairmen of the committees and the officers of the Sunday School Missionary Society should form a Board of Managers for the entire school.

*Relation of the Officers of the
Missionary Society to the
Officers of the School*

The Sunday School Missionary Society is the creature of the Sunday School Board and must work in entire harmony with the general policy of the school. The enlistment of the sympathy and co-

operation of the superintendent and teachers of the Sunday School should be a chief aim of the Sunday School Missionary Society. Little can be accomplished without their aid. Above all, the superintendent must be enlisted and must assume a favorable attitude toward missions. He should frequently have a part in the exercises, as should the teachers. No one person, not even the superintendent of the Sunday School Missionary Society, should be the only one to appear before the school in behalf of missions. A Sunday School teacher recently asked her class of junior girls if they would like to take up a certain series of missionary lessons which she outlined. One girl spoke up with this inquiry: "Why should you teach us missions? That is Mr. H.'s business." Mr. H. was superintendent of the Sunday School Missionary Society. We must have missionary specialists in our Sunday Schools, but we must also guard against the feeling that may arise that missions is a side issue rather

than a regular phase of our Sunday School activity. This can be done only when teachers and officers are all heartily enlisted. The ultimate ideal in Sunday School missionary education is to diffuse the missionary spirit through the entire school so that the teachers will come to teach the regular lessons from a missionary standpoint, and missionary education will become identified with Christian education.

Meetings of the Board of Managers

The frequency of board meetings will depend upon the policy adopted and the character of the committee organization. In cases where the board carries on the work without committee organization, a monthly meeting will be necessary. When there is a full committee organization the committee should meet at least monthly, and the Board, with committee members present, should meet at least quarterly, or as often as may be necessary to direct the policy of the Society and to keep the

committees active. Frequent meetings are useless unless there is work to do, but live committees will have something to do continually.

Determining a Policy

The first act after the election of officers is the adoption of a program and plans for the year. What methods and plans shall we employ this year? and when shall each be put into effect? are the two important questions. The Centenary Standard for the Sunday School includes the following points *:

I. Organization:

(This requirement is presumably already met);

II. Education:

The use of the Centenary programs each month, and emphasis on week-day reading of the books listed in the Centenary catalogue;

III. Giving:

(1) The acceptance of a definite quota for the whole school, and pos-

* For detailed statement of the Centenary plan for the Sunday School, send for *Centenary Handbook for Sunday School Workers*.

sibly of definite goals for classes and departments;

(2) An every member canvass for missions, using the illustrated graded leaflets;

(3) Regular giving, on a weekly basis, if possible, through the use of the Centenary envelopes.

IV. *Service:*

A graded program of service-activities. (See leaflet, *Training in Service.*)

V. *Prayer:*

Adequate training in intercession. A definite effort must be made to train our boys and girls in regular habits of prayer for particular fields, for individual missionaries, and for the success of the Christian World Program. (See leaflet, *Training in Prayer.*)

Preparation of Officers and Committee Men

Each officer and worker in a Sunday School Missionary Society should seek every possible opportunity to become familiar with the best methods of missionary education and thus become proficient in the work for which he is responsible. The best preparation is attendance upon one of the Summer

Conferences of the Missionary Education Movement. These ten-day Conferences are devoted wholly to the discussion of missionary education, and classes are held daily for teachers and workers of each grade in the Sunday School, as well as for superintendents and general missionary officers. A second source of preparation is the missionary and general institutes of the Board of Sunday Schools. These gatherings are held from time to time in various sections of the country. Each general institute devotes special periods to the discussion of missionary education. Distinctively missionary institutes are also held occasionally. If attendance upon these gatherings is impossible, officers and members should make a careful study of the various books and leaflets published on this subject.

A Worthy Service

The work of the Sunday School Missionary Society is hard work, but it is worth while. Not only is careful preparation desirable,

but devotion and consecration to the task are necessary. Every member of the committee should seek a vision of the possibilities of this work. They go far beyond that of a large collection. The material being dealt with is flesh and blood, not money. Ideals, convictions, character — well-rounded Christian character — are at stake. Efficient or inefficient Christians are in the making. So far as aggressive Kingdom extension ideals are concerned the Sunday School Missionary Society carries the brunt of the burden. It is a large task, one which can be accomplished only by prayer and consecration.

Correspondence

Correspondence concerning any phase of missionary education and giving in the Sunday School may be addressed to the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 58 East Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois.

